اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer

Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 88 – Al-Ghashiyah (The Overwhelming Event)

سُوْرَةُ الْغَاشِيَةِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ الْغَاشِيَةِ ۝١

(88-1) Has the news of the overwhelming event reached you? (1)

(1) The overwhelming: the Resurrection which will overshadow the whole world. One should know that here the Hereafter as a whole is being depicted, which comprehends all the stages from the upsetting of the present system to the resurrection of all human beings and the dispensation of rewards and punishments from the divine court.

وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ خَاشِعَةٌ ۝٢

(88-2) Some faces (2) that Day shall be downcast with fear,

(2) Some faces: some persons, for the face is the most conspicuous part of the human body by which man’s personality is judged and which reflects the good or bad states through which man passes.

عَامِلَةٌ نَّاصِبَةٌ ۝٣

(88-3) be toiling and worn-out;

تَصْلٰى نَارًا حَامِيَةً ۝٤

(88-4) they shall burn in a Scorching Fire;

تُسْقٰى مِنْ عَيْنٍ اٰنِيَةٍ ۝٥

(88-5) their drink shall be from a boiling spring.

لَيْسَ لَهُمْ طَعَامٌ اِلَّا مِنْ ضَرِيْعٍ ۝٦

(88-6) They shall have no food except bitter dry thorns [3]

(3) At some places in the Quran, it has been stated that the dwellers of Hell will be given zaqqum زَقُّوْمٍ to eat; at another place it has been said that they will have no other food but ghislin غِسْلِيْنٍ (washing from wounds), and here that their only food will be thorny dry grass. There is, in fact, no contradiction between these statements. This may as well mean that Hell will have many different compartments in which different categories of the criminals will be lodged according to their crimes, and subjected to different punishments. This may also mean that if they try to avoid zaqqum they will be given ghislin, and if they try to avoid even that, they will only get thorny grass. In short, they would get nothing to suit their taste.

لَّا يُسْمِنُ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ مِنْ جُوْعٍ ۝٧

(88-7) that will neither nourish nor satisfy their hunger.

وُجُوْهٌ يَّوْمَئِذٍ نَّاعِمَةٌ ۝٨

(88-8) On that very Day some faces shall be radiant with joy,

لِّسَعْيِهَا رَاضِيَةٌ ۝٩

(88-9) well-pleased with their striving. [4]

(4) That is: they will be overjoyed to see the best results in the Hereafter of their endeavors and deeds in the world; they will be satisfied to see that they had, in fact, made a profitable bargain in that they had adopted a life of faith, virtue and piety, by sacrificing the desires of the flesh, undergone hardships in carrying out their obligations, endured afflictions in obeying the divine commands, incurred losses and suffered deprivation of benefits and pleasures while trying to avoid sins and acts of disobedience.

فِى جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ١٠

(88-10) They will be in a lofty Garden

لَّا تَسْمَعُ فِيَا لٰغِيَةً ١١

(88-11) wherein they shall hear no vain talk. (5)

(5) This thing has been mentioned at several places in the Quran as a major blessing of Paradise. (For explanation, see (E.N. 38 of Surah Maryam); (E.N. 18 of Surah At-Toor); (E.N. 13 of Surah Al-Waqiah); (E.N. 21 of Surah An-Naba).

فِيا عَيْنٌ جَارِيَةٌ ١٢

(88-12) In it there shall be a flowing spring,

فِيا سُرُرٌ مَّرْفُوعَةٌ ١٣

(88-13) and couches raised high,

وَّ اَكْوَابٌ مَّوْضُوعَةٌ ١٤

(88-14) and goblets laid out, (6)

(6) That is, filled goblets already supplied so that they do not have to ask for them.

وَّ نَمَارِقُ مَصْفُوفَةٌ ١٥

(88-15) and cushions arrayed in rows,

وَّ زَرَابِيُّ مَبْثُوثَةٌ ١٦

(88-16) and rich carpets levelled out.

اَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ اِلَى الْاِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ ١٧

(88-17) Do (these unbelievers) not observe the camels: how they were created?

وَ اِلَى السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ ١٨

(88-18) And the sky: how it was raised high?

وَ اِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ ١٩

(88-19) And the mountains: how they were fixed?

وَ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ ٢٠

(88-20) And the earth: how it was spread out? [7]

(7) That is, if they deny the possibility of the Hereafter, have they never looked around themselves and considered how the camels were created, how the heaven was raised high, how the mountains were firmly set and how the earth was spread out? When all these things could be created, and exist before them in their finished form, why can the Resurrection not take place? Why cannot a new world come about, and why cannot Hell and Heaven be possible? Only a foolish and thoughtless person would think that the coming into existence of only those things which he has found existing, on opening his eyes in the world, is possible, because they already exist. As for the things, which he has not yet observed and experienced, he should thoughtlessly pass the judgment that their coming into being is impossible. If he has any

common sense, he should think as to how the things, which already exist, came into being? How did the camel possessing precisely the same characteristics as needed for the beast required by the desert dwellers of Arabia come into being? How did the sky whose atmosphere is filled with air to breathe in, whose clouds bring rain, whose sun provides light and warmth in the day, whose moon and stars shine at night, come into being? How did the earth spread out on which man lives and passes his life, whose products fulfill all his needs and requirements on whose springs and wells his life depends? How did the mountains rise up from the surface of the earth, which stand fixed with earth and stones of different colors and a variety of minerals in them? Has all this happened without the artistic skill of an All-Powerful, All- Wise Designer. No thinking and intelligent mind can answer this question in the negative. Unless it is stubborn and obstinate, it will have to acknowledge that each one of these things was impossible, had not an Omnipotent, Wise Being made it possible. And when an All-Powerful, Wise Being created these things, there is no reason why the Hereafter should be regarded as remote from reason and impossible.

فَذَكِّرْ ۖ إِنَّمَا أَنتَ مُذَكِّرٌ ﴿٢١﴾

(88-21) So render good counsel, for you are simply required to counsel,

لَّسْتَ عَلَيْهِم بِمُصَيْطِرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

(88-22) and are not invested with the authority to compel them. (8)

(8) That is, if a person does not listen to reason, he may not. You have not been appointed to force the will of the deniers: your only task is to distinguish the right from the wrong for the people and warn them of the consequences of following the wrong way; so this is the task you should continue to perform.

اِلَّا مَنۡ تَوَلّٰی وَ كَفَرَ ﴿۲۳﴾

(88-23) But whoever will turn away (from the Truth),

فَيُعَذِّبُهُ اللّٰهُ الۡعَذَابَ الۡاَكۡبَرَ ؕ ﴿۲۴﴾

(88-24) Allah will chastise him with the most terrible chastisement.

اِنَّ اِلَيۡنَاۤ اِيَابَهُمۡ ﴿۲۵﴾

(88-25) Surely to Us is their return;

ثُمَّ اِنَّ عَلَيۡنَا حِسَابَهُمۡ ۙ﴿۲۶﴾

(88-26) and then it is for Us to call them to account.